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Fifty-eighth session
Third Committee
Agenda item 113
Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on working methods

Note by the Secretariat

1. At its thirty-fourth session, which closed on 3 October 2003, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the treaty body established to monitor implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted a recommendation on its working methods in which it decided that beginning at its thirty-eighth session, in January 2005, for an initial period of two years, it would consider the reports of States parties submitted in accordance with the Convention in two parallel chambers. Each chamber would consist of nine members of the Committee, taking due account of equitable geographical distribution. In its recommendation the Committee also requests the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session to approve the decision and provide financial support for the Committee to work in two chambers, beginning at the pre-sessional working group for its thirty-eighth session which will take place in October 2004.

2. The Committee's recommendation is contained in the annex to the present note.

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Annex

Recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

The Committee on the Rights of the Child,

Welcoming once again the rapid and unprecedented number of ratifications of and accessions to the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, making it, with 192 States parties, the most widely accepted international human rights instrument,

Recalling that in accordance with article 44 of the Convention, States parties are requested periodically to submit reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child for the purpose of examining progress made in achieving the realization of the obligations recognized under the Convention,

Noting with great concern that the Committee on the Rights of the Child is faced with an extremely heavy workload and a significant backlog of States parties' reports awaiting review, and that reports submitted cannot be considered by the Committee until approximately two years after their submission,

Aware that 13 initial reports and 100 second periodic reports are overdue,

Aware also that since the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict entered into force in 2002, States parties have begun to submit initial reports on the implementation of these protocols,

Recalling the approval by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session of the Committee's recommendation adopted at its fifth session in January 1994 requesting the Assembly to increase the number of its annual sessions and pre-sessional working groups to enable the Committee to address its workload,

Recalling also that in January 2000, the Committee decided to consider the reports of 27, rather than 18, States parties annually, thereby increasing its workload by 50 per cent, in order to address the backlog of States parties' reports awaiting review,

Highlighting the fact that in order to rationalize its work and that of States parties, the Committee decided at its thirtieth session in 2002 to request all States parties to limit their periodic reports to 120 pages,

Welcoming the entry into force on 18 November 2002 of the amendment to article 43, paragraph 2, of the Convention increasing the membership of the Committee from 10 to 18 members,

Welcoming also the ongoing dialogue the Committee has established with States parties to the Convention on its working methods, including during its informal meeting with States parties in Geneva on 19 January 2003,

Recalling the Secretary-General's emphasis, in his report on strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387 and Corr.1), on the importance of continued efforts to modernize the human rights treaty system, and the General Assembly's call for streamlined reporting procedures contained in its resolution 57/300,

Convinced that fundamental reform of its working methods is required so that the Committee can consider States parties' reports in a timely manner,

1. *Decides* that beginning at its thirty-eighth session in January 2005, for an initial period of two years, it will consider the reports of States parties in two parallel chambers, each consisting of nine members of the Committee, taking due account of equitable geographical distribution, thereby increasing the number of States parties' reports to be examined from 27 to 48 a year;

2. *Requests* the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session to approve the Committee's decision and to provide appropriate financial resources to enable the Committee to work in two chambers, beginning at the pre-sessional working group for its thirty-eighth session.